

Message Text

SECRET

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FM AMEMBASSY JIDDA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 2968
INFO AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY CAIRO IMMEDIATE

S E C R E T SECTION 1 OF 2 JIDDA 5841

EXDIS DISTRIBUTE AS NODIS

C O R R E C T E D C O P Y (TEXT CORRECTED)

FOR THE SECRETARY FROM ATHERTON

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: MARR, EG, IS, SA
SUBJ: MEETING WITH PRINCE SAUD

1. AMBASSADOR WEST AND I HAD A VERY GOOD TWO HOUR MEETING WITH PRINCE SAUD IN TAIF EVENING AUGUST 9 IN WHICH SAUD EXPRESSED FULL SUPPORT FOR THE PRESIDENT'S INVITATION TO SADAT AND BEGIN AND SAID HE WAS CONSIDERING RECOMMENDING THAT SAG ISSUE A PUBLIC STATEMENT OF SUPPORT. IN THIS CABLE I WANT TO GIVE YOU THE HIGH-LIGHTS OF THE MEETING. A FULL ACCOUNT WILL FOLLOW SHORTLY.

2. I BEGAN THE MEETING WITH A BROAD REVIEW OF THE SITUATION AS WE SEE IT AND WENT THROUGH IN DETAIL WITH SAUD THE TALKING POINTS THAT YOU APPROVED. I STRESSED THAT THE PRESIDENT FELT THE MOMENT WAS CRITICAL AND THAT A U.S. INITIATIVE AND ALL-OUT EFFORT TO BREAK THE IMPASSE WAS NECESSARY. I EXPLAINED IN SOME DETAIL WHY DIRECT NEGOTIATIONS BETWEEN THE PARTIES ARE NECESSARY. IN THIS REGARD SAUD SAID FLATLY THAT HE FELT SAUDI ARABIA'S POSITION ON NEGOTIATIONS HAD BEEN MISREPRESENTED. SAUDIS HAD NOT

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SOUGHT TO PUT AN END TO NEGOTIATIONS, AND FAHD'S TRIP TO CAIRO HAD NOT HAD THAT PURPOSE; FAHD HAD IN FACT ARRIVED IN EGYPT AFTER SADAT HAD MADE HIS DECISION NOT TO GO TO FOLLOW-ON TALKS TO LEEDS.

3. I STRESSED PRESIDENT'S SERIOUSNESS OF PURPOSE IN INVITING SADAT AND BEGIN TO CAMP DAVID, AND I POINTED OUT THAT IN DOING SO THE PRESIDENT HAD ENGAGED HIS PRESTIGE. IT IS AN ACT OF COURAGE

WHICH DESERVES THE BROADEST POSSIBLE SUPPORT AND WE ARE CONFIDENT IT WILL FIND SUPPORT FROM SAUDI ARABIA. SAUD REPLIED WITH CONSIDERABLE FEELING THAT "WE WANT CAMP DAVID TO SUCCEED" BECAUSE ITS SUCCESS WOULD BE THE SUCCESS OF "OUR CLOSEST FRIENDS, EGYPT AND THE U.S." HE SAID "WE WILL DO EVERYTHING WE CAN TO HELP" AND ADDED THAT SAUDI ARABIA WILL MAKE ITS SUPPORT KNOWN.

4. IN RESPONSE TO A QUESTION BY SAUD AS TO THE LIKELY OUTCOME OF THE CAMP CAFIC MEETING, I SAID THAT WHILE I COULD MAKE NO SPECIFIC FORECAST I COULD ASSURE SAUD THAT WE DO NOT REGARD THE MEETING AS A PRO-FORMA EXERCISE; WE ENVISAGE A SERIOUS DISCUSSION AT HIGHEST LEVEL ABOUT HOW TO OVERCOME PRESENT DIFFERENCES ON KEY ISSUES. SAUD SPOKE AT LENGTH OF HIS CONCERN THAT SADAT, HAVING ALREADY MADE CONCESSIONS ON PEACE AND SECURITY, WOULD BE ASKED FOR FURTHER COMPROMISES. HE STRESSED THAT WHATEVER COMES OUT OF CAMP DAVID MUST BE BROADLY ACCEPTABLE IN THE ARAB WORLD. SAUD REPEATEDLY RETURNED TO THIS CONCERN, THAT AT CAMP DAVID WE WOULD PRESS SADAT TO AGREE TO COMPROMISES ON WITHDRAWAL AND PALESTINIAN ISSUE THAT WOULD BE UNACCEPTABLE TO THE ARABS. I REPEATED THAT I COULD OBVIOUSLY NOT SAY WHAT WOULD EMERGE FROM CAMP DAVID, BUT SAID SAUDIS CAN BE ASSURED THAT IDEAS WE PUT FORWARD ON ALL OF THE MAJOR ISSUES -- PEACE,

WITHDRAWAL, SECURITY, AND THE PALESTINIANS -- WILL BE CONSISTENT WITH OUR POSITIONS ON RESOLUTION 242 WHICH SECRETARY AND PRESIDENT HAVE EXPLAINED TO SAUDI LEADERS OVER PAST YEAR. I EXPLAINED ALSO THAT AT CAMP DAVID WE WOULD BE SEEKING AGREEMENT ON THE BROAD PRINCIPLES
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THAT MUST GUIDE A COMPREHENSIVE SETTLEMENT RATHER THAN THE DETAILS. I COULD NOT PREDICT WHETHER THERE WOULD BE AGREEMENT OR IF SO WHAT THE DETAILS WOULD LOOK LIKE AND COULD NOT DISCUSS SPECIFIC FORMULATIONS

WHICH WOULD HAVE TO EMERGE FROM THE NEGOTIATIONS, BUT I DID THINK THAT AT LEAST AT THE END OUR IDEAS WOULD BE CLEAR. ALL THIS SEEMED TO REASSURE SAUD. HE REITERATED HIS SUPPORT FOR THE CAMP DAVID MEETING, BUT ADDED THAT SAUDI ARABIA FEELS TOWARD IT LIKE THE MOTHER OF THE BRIDE; IT WAITS WITH BOTH HOPE AND APPREHENSION.

5. AFTER WE HAD GONE THROUGH THIS AT LENGTH, I RAISED QUESTION OF SOVIET INVOLVEMENT IN THE PEACE PROCESS, POINTING OUT THAT WE HAVE

ALWAYS FELT THE SOVIETS WILL HAVE TO BE INVOLVED AT SOME POINT BUT THINK THEIR INVOLVEMENT AT THE OUTSET WOULD COMPLICATE THE TASK IMPOSSIBLY. IN THIS REGARD I SAID THE SECRETARY HAD ASKED ME TO MENTION THAT HE HAD BEEN SURPRISED TO HEAR THE SOVIETS QUOTING THE SAUDIS AS SAYING THEY (THE SAUDIS) WANT THE SOVIETS BROUGHT IN. SAUD REACTED VERY QUICKLY TO THIS, SAYING SAUDI ARABIA SAW A SOVIET ROLE ONLY BECAUSE OF SOVIET INFLUENCE WITH THE PALESTINIANS AND TO A LESSER DEGREE WITH THE SYRIANS, AND BECAUSE THE U.S. HAD NOT TAKEN A POSITION THAT WOULD ATTRACT BROAD ARAB SUPPORT. HE

REMARKED QUITE POINTEDLY THAT IF THERE WERE A CHANGE IN THE AMERICAN POSITION TOWARD THE PALESTINIANS, AND THE U.S. WERE TO "BUILD BRIDGES" TO THE PALESTINIANS, THERE WOULD BE NO NEED FOR A SOVIET ROLE. IN THE ABSENCE OF THAT, THE SOVIETS WOULD PROBABLY BE NEEDED TO BRING THE PALESTINIANS ALONG. HAVING MADE THIS POINT, SAUD WENT ON TO SAY, WITH CONSIDERABLE EMPHASIS ON HIS WORDS, THAT AS A GENERAL PRINCIPLE SAUDI ARABIA WOULD LIKE THERE TO BE NO SOVIET INVOLVEMENT EITHER IN THE PEACE PROCESS OR IN ANY OTHER WAY IN THE MIDDLE EAST: "WE DON'T WANT THEM HERE, AND WE DON'T THINK THEY HAVE A ROLE TO PLAY".

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S E C R E T SECTION 2 OF 2 JIDDA 5841

EXDIS DISTRIBUTE AS NODIS

C O R R E C T E D C O P Y (TEXT CORRECTED)

FOR THE SECRETARY FROM ATHERTON

6. FINAL POINT SAUD HAD TO MAKE REGARDING THE CAMP DAVID MEETING WAS THAT HE HOPED WHAT EMERGES THEREFROM WILL INCLUDE THE PALESTINIANS AND THE PRINCIPLE OF SELF-DETERMINATION FOR THE PALESTINIANS. HE STRESSED THAT THIS WOULD BE VERY IMPORTANT ON GAINING SUPPORT IN THE ARAB WORLD. I SAID I COULD UNDERSTAND THIS CONCERN BUT CAUTIONED THAT WHAT WE WANT IS A WORKABLE SET OF PRINCIPLES

NOT A RINGING DECLARATION THAT WILL NOT ADVANCE THE CAUSE OF PEACE IN PRACTICAL WAYS. ON THE PALESTINIAN QUESTION, WE BELIEVED THE ASWAN FORMULATION WAS A PRACTICAL ONE.

7. WE THEN TURNED TO DISCUSSION OF LEBANON. I STRESSED OUR CONCERN OVER THE SITUATION THERE AND TOLD SAUD OF THE TIME AND EFFORT YOU HAD BUT IN ON THE LEBANESE PROBLEM DURING YOUR TRIP. SAUD SAID HE HAD READ OUR PRESS BRIEFING ON LEBANON AND CONSIDERED IT VERY

GOOD. HE RECOUNTED THE TALKS FAHD AND HE HAD HAD RECENTLY IN DAMASCUS, SAYING THAT THE SYRIANS ARE VERY SUSPICIOUS OF THE U.S. SYRIANS MISUNDERSTOOD THE U.S. EFFORT TO CALL A SECURITY COUNCIL MEETING ON LEBANON, SAW THE HAND OF ISRAEL -- AND THEREFORE
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THE U.S. -- BEHIND THE AGGRESSIVENESS OF THE CHRISTIAN MILITIAS, AND WERE SUSPICIOUS OF THE CONTACTS OF THE AMERICAN AMBASSADOR IN BEIRUT WITH THE CHRISTIAN LEADERS. I SAID NONE OF THIS IS TRUE. AS REGARDS THE LAST POINT, I EXPLAINED THAT AMBASSADOR PARKER'S CONTACTS WERE UNDERTAKEN ON INSTRUCTIONS FROM WASHINGTON AND IN THE CAUSE OF RESTRAINING THE CHRISTIAN EXTREMISTS AND STRENGTHENING PRESIDENT SARKIS. SAUD SAID HE AND FAHD HAD TOLD THE SYRIANS THAT THEIR SUSPICIONS OF THE U.S. ARE UNFOUNDED. SAUD SAID HE CONSIDER-
ED MOST IMPORTANT THING U.S. COULD DO NOW WOULD BE TO GIVE AS MUCH ATTENTION AS POSSIBLE TO ITS CONTACTS WITH THE SYRIANS. I TOLD SAUD WE HAD BEEN AND STILL WERE ACTIVE IN DAMASCUS, AND ESPECIALLY IN ISRAEL, IN SEEKING TO KEEP THE LID ON IN LEBANON.

8. IN ACCORDANCE WITH STATE 200866 I DID NOT USE TALKING POINTS ON LEBANON IN STATE 200854. I TOLD SAUD WE DO NOT HAVE ANYTHING TO SUGGEST AT THE MOMENT BUT WILL WANT TO STAY IN CLOSE TOUCH WITH THE SAG ON LEBANON.

9. AT END OF GROUP MEETING, I ASKED FOR PRIVATE TALK WITH SAUD AND MADE THE POINTS YOU HAD ASKED ME TO CONVEY, ADDING A FEW OF MY OWN ABOUT THE WAY THE "NON-PAPER" (I.E. MY TALKING POINTS) WHICH I LEFT WITH HIM JULY 23 HAD BEEN DISTORTED AND MISUSED. MAIN POINT I MADE WAS THAT WE FELT SAUDIS HAD ENCOURAGED EGYPTIANS TO HAVE NO FURTHER DIRECT CONTACTS WITH ISRAELIS AND HAD GENERALLY APPEARED TO BE WORKING AT CROSS PURPOSES WITH US DURING CRITICAL PERIOD FOLLOWING LEEDS TALKS. I SAID YOU WERE QUITE UNHAPPY ABOUT ALL THIS AND THAT WE HOPED SAUDIS WOULD CONSULT WITH US IN FIRST INSTANCE WHEN THEY DISAGREED WITH US, RATHER THAN GOING TO OTHERS. SAUD PROTESTED THAT WE HAD MISUNDERSTOOD THEIR ACTIONS AND MOTIVES, BUT HE SEEMED TO ME EVASIVE ABOUT SPECIFICS AND SEQUENCE OF EVENTS. WITHOUT ARGUING DETAILS, I EXPRESSED CONCERN ABOUT PERCEPTIONS ALL THIS HAD CREATED IN U.S. WITH RESPECT TO U.S.-SAUDI RELATIONS. AT THE
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END, SAUD SAID HE WOULD RECOMMEND PRINCE FAHD ISSUE STATEMENT OF SUPPORT FOR PRESIDENT CARTER'S PROPOSAL FOR CAMP DAVID MEETING. I TOLD HIM THIS WOULD BE IMPORTANT FOR PRESIDENTS CARTER AND SADAT AND ALSO FOR U.S.-SAUDI RELATIONS. WE WILL HAVE TO WAIT AND SEE WHETHER SUCH A STATEMENT IS IN FACT FORTHCOMING AND WHAT IT SAYS BUT

IN ANY EVENT I BELIEVE THIS EXCHANGE WAS ESSENTIAL TO CLEAR THE AIR
AND WILL HOPEFULLY HAVE SOME SALUTARY EFFECT ON SAUD. AT END OF
MEETING, SAUD SAID HE WOULD ARRANGE MEETING WITH CROWN PRINCE FAHD,
ABOUT WHICH UP TO THEN HE AND OTHER SAUDIS HAD BEEN VAGUE AND UNWILLING

TO BE PINNED DOWN. WE LEFT SAUD WELL AFTER MIDNIGHT, AND WITHIN AN
HOUR HAD CONFIRMATION THAT MEETING WITH FAHD WILL BE THURSDAY AT
2000 LOCAL IN JIDDA.

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